

COMMUNITY POLICE REVIEW COMMISSION POLICY RECOMMENDATION

RPD POLICY AND PROCEDURES 4.23

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POLICY Public Safety Dispatcher's Responsibilities

Rationale:

The Community Police Review Commission recently reviewed an Officer-Involved Death (OID) case involving a resident of the Riverside community. The Commission found that the involved officer's "Use of Deadly Force" was reasonable, within Riverside Police Department's Policy and within the scope of both State and Federal Law.

Notwithstanding of the Commission's finding that deadly force was reasonable and within RPD policy in this case; the Commission is concerned about issues related to the tactical aspects, the initial response by officer(s) and the call information, related to the officers by the dispatch center personnel.

Recognizing that domestic violence incidents are amongst the most dangerous calls officers respond to, adherence to established domestic violence protocols, regarding dispatch information is of utmost importance. It is essential that responding police personnel be informed of detailed background information and revised / updated details as they are responding. This information has a critical impact on pre-arrival planning and the handling of the call.

A number of factors may have altered the manner in which this response was coordinated, if the handling unit was advised of the prior domestics violence calls at the location and information pertaining to the offender's extensive criminal history, and his propensity for violence toward Law Enforcement personnel. These factors include but are not limited to, requesting additional backup personnel, requesting the immediate response of a field supervisor and the deployment of additional tactical weaponry (e.g. bean bag shot gun). The responding officers armed with the aforementioned information may have recognized, before arriving on scene, that this offender posed a definite threat and that they would not be sufficiently equipped to safely defuse and apprehend the offender, without encountering a situation wherein, the use of deadly force was necessary.

In this case, there was no evidence presented to the Community Police Review Commission to substantiate that the dispatch personnel checked, confirmed or broadcasted relevant offender information, pertaining to location history or the criminal history of the offender.

RPD Policy Section 4.23, Domestic Violence Policy, Subsections E.1.a and E.f.(2) and (6)

E. PROCEDURES

1. Public Safety Dispatcher's Responsibilities:

- a. The dispatcher who receives a domestic violence call can provide the responding officers with vital information that could save the victim's and the officer's life. The dispatcher will, whenever possible, dispatch at least two officers to every incident.
- b. All calls reporting threatened, imminent or ongoing domestic violence, and the violation of any protective order, including orders issued pursuant to PC §136.2, and restraining orders, shall be ranked among the highest priority calls.
- c. Dispatchers are not required to verify the validity of the protective order before responding to the request for assistance.
- d. Dispatchers should give high priority to all domestic violence calls for assistance regardless of the existence of an order.
- e. If the reporting party reports a violation of any protective order, stay-away order, or other restraining order, the dispatcher should dispatch an officer(s) prior to verifying the validity of the order and attempt verification while the responding officer(s) is en route to the scene.
- f. In addition to information normally gathered, an effort should be made to determine and relay the following to the responding officers:
 - (1) Whether the suspect is present and, if not, the suspect's description and possible whereabouts;
 - (2) Whether weapons are involved;
 - (3) Whether the offender is under the influence of drugs or alcohol;
 - (4) Whether there are children present;
 - (5) Whether the victim has a current protective or restraining order;
 - (6) Complaint history at that location.

Recommendation:

The Commission recommends that RPD Policy 4.23 be revised to include appropriate modifications which might read as follows:

E. PROCEDURES

1. Public Safety Dispatcher's Responsibilities:

- a. The dispatcher who receives a domestic violence call **shall** provide the responding officers with vital information that could save the victim's and the officer's life. The dispatcher **will** dispatch at least two officers **and one field supervisor** to every incident.

E. PROCEDURES

1. Public Safety Dispatcher's Responsibilities:

- f. In addition to information normally gathered, an effort **shall** be made to determine and relay the following information to the responding officers.”
 - (2) Whether weapons are involved, **if the suspect is currently or has recently physically assaulted the victim, if the victim is injured, and / or in need of medical attention;**
 - (6) Complaint history at the location, **including a brief description of the offender's criminal history.**

The Commission believes that reviewing, monitoring, and correcting simple policy directives may result in a safer and more efficient manner of handling domestic violence incidents. The review and modification of these policy directives may also have a positive effect in the reduction of civil liability cases filed against the City.



Dale Roberts, Chair
Community Police Review Commission

November 13, 2013

Date